

Notes on Revelation 21

Intro: Chapters 21-22 reveal the final glory of the people of God under the figure of the new Jerusalem. Here at the end of time is the complete fulfillment of all that the prophets had spoken concerning the wonderful blessings of the Messiah's coming. The old Jerusalem, having been trampled under foot by the Gentiles has been purged of its sinful inhabitants and in its place there comes a new Jerusalem, where God reigns as king forever. The new Jerusalem itself is only the principle city of a new heaven and a new earth where God's blessings are found.

The new order introduced

The new heaven and the new earth

The referent for this language are passages like Is. 65:16ff & Is. 66:22ff where Isaiah seems to be looking to the Messianic age and perhaps its consummation in the eternal kingdom.

No sea--seems to refer to the "sea" from which the beast came (Rev. 13:2), or perhaps the "sea" representing the journey from our world to God's (Rev. 4:6; 15:2)

First heaven and earth passed away--Cf. 20:11; 2 Pet. 3:10ff

New Jerusalem--The new order of things results in the establishment of "new Jerusalem" as the principle city.

The holy city--the phrase reminds us that it has been purged of sin
New Jerusalem--remind us that the harlot city has been judged leaving behind only the measured "temple of God and those who worship therein" (Rev. 11:2). These are the new Jerusalem.

Coming down out of heaven--reminds us that the origin of the city is with God, he creates this city by his creative power.

Made ready as a bride--conveys the complete preparation for the life of those who occupy the city.

God dwells among his people

God's tent is with men, he dwells with them, they are his people, God will be among them

He shall wipe away every tear...--those things that bring sorrow will be removed.

God affirms that it is a work of his power that ensures its completion.

"Behold, I make all things new". "It is done..."

It is the inheritance of those who overcome; but it is not for those who live in sin. The new Jerusalem is the antithesis of the lake of fire! (v. 8)

The new Jerusalem described

I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. The picture of the city is really the picture of people in relationship with God. Just as the great city who persecuted God's people was called a harlot, the holy city is called the bride of Christ. Keep in mind that the the reality should not be confused with the symbol conveying it.

An external view

Has the glory of God--Cf. the tabernacle, temple, and church who possess God's glory symbolically

A great and high wall--renders the city secure from attack

The portals of entrance indicate the access of God's spiritual Israel to the city, a gate for every tribe; angel stand to welcome those who would come in.

The foundation stones seem to symbolize the work of the apostles whose revelation of truth makes entrance into this city possible. Later we see the foundations adorned with precious stones of all kinds.

The measure is 1,500 miles in all directions.

The wall measures about 218 feet.

The city buildings seem to be constructed out of pure gold.

The twelve gates were each constructed from a single pearl (thus our phrase pearly gates).

The street was pure gold.

An internal view

No temple. God does not need a symbol of his presence; for he is actually there.

No heavenly bodies to give light. God's glory is sufficient to provide light, and thus there is no night.

The nations walk by the light of the city.

The kings of earth bring their glory into it. Those who had been exalted among men, do also exalt God and glorify him. It is a tribute to God that those who are great among men realize their insignificance in God's sight and thus glorify him.

The gates never shut (Cf. (Is. 60:11). The wealth of the nations is continually brought in.

Only the righteous may enter into the holy city, those in the Lamb's book of life.